

Message Text

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SUBJECT: CODEL MEYNER DISCUSSIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN AND

PM RIFAI ON AIR DEFENSE SALE

1. SUMMARY: KING HUSSEIN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI JOINTLY RECEIVED HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE HELEN MEYNER, HER HUSBAND FORMER GOVERNOR MEYNER AND CHARGE AT ROYAL PALANCE IN AQABA ON JULY 8. ASIDE FROM GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ALONG FAMILIAR LINES OF MIDEAST SITUATION MAJOR FOCUS OF DISCUSSIONS WAS ON CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL DELIBERATIONS ON USG SALE OF AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO JORDAN. REPRESENTATIVE MEYNER INDICATED SHE SHOULD SUPPORT THE AIR DEFENSE SALE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRIME MINISTER RIFAI INDICATED THAT GOJ IS PUZZLED AND CONCERNED OVER CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO THE AIR DEFENSE DEAL AS REPRESENTED BY THE ROSENTHAL AMENDMENT. HE SAID CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION REMINDED HIM OF AN ARAB PROVERB, IT IS LIKE A FLY IN ONE'S SOUP, WHICH WON'T KILL YOU BUT ONLY WANT TO MAKE YOU THROW UP."

3. RIFAI WENT THROUGH SAME ARGUMENTS HE USED WITH REPRESENTATIVE DON BONKER THE PREVIOUS DAY: A) JORDAN NEEDS MILITARY STRENGTH TO BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN MODERATE POLICIES WHICH ARE HELPFUL TO CONTINUED PEACE IN THE

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AREA B) ALL OF JORDAN'S NEIGHBORS HAVE AIR DEFENSE

C) THE CONTINUED ABSENCE OF ONE IN JORDAN AND JORDAN'S INABILITY TO DEFEND IT AIRSPACE CREATES PROBLEMS FOR ARMY MORALE AND IN JORDAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES. JORDAN WOULD BE UNDER STRONG PRESSURE TO ACCEPT A AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM FROM SYRIA WHICH WOULD PROBABLY INVOLVE STATIONING OF SYRIAN TROOPS ON JORDANIAN SOIL AND CREATE THE KIND OF SITUATION THAT JORDAN HAS BEEN TRYING TO AVOID D) SAUDI ARABIA IS PAYING FOR ENTIRE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AND USG FUNDING IS NOT REQUIRED.

4. KING HUSSEIN EVINCED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION SAYING THAT HE HAD HAD MANY DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER IN COMING TO THE AGREEMENT AND THAT THIS LATE HOUR CONGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMEN WAS "MOST ANNOYING" AND THAT THE MORE THOUGH ABOUT IT THE MORE ANNOYED HE BECAME.

5. REPRESENTATIVE MEYNER INDICATED THAT SHE SHOULD SUPPORT JORDAN ON THIS ISSUE AND WOULD BE WILLING TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF AIR DEFENSE SALE IF ISSUE SHOULD COME BEFORE THE HOUSE FLOOR. SHE STATED SHE PERSONALLY WAS OPTIMISTIC HOWEVER THAT HOUSE DELIBERATIONS WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY THREATEN THE AIR DEFENSE SALE.

5. ON OTHER TOPICS KING HUSSEIN REPLIED TO A QUESTION REGARDING ISRAELI RADIO ALLEGATIONS THAT JORDAN IS ALLOWING PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ARMY UNITS BACK INTO JORDAN. KING STATED THAT PLA HAS ALWAYS HAD A BATTALION HERE FOR SYMBOLIC REASONS BUT THAT KING HAS NO DESIRE TO INCREASE THEIR PRESENCE HERE. HE ADDED THAT EVEN IMAGINING THAT HE PERSONALLY WERE WILLING TO GIVE THEM A "SECOND CHANCE" AFTER BITTER 1970 CIVIL WAR JORDANIAN ARMY AND PEOPLE WOULD NOT PERMIT IT.

6. COMMENT: VISIT BY CODEL MEYNER WAS BENEFICIAL IN ASSUAGING IF NOT TOTALLY RELIEVING KINGS AND PMS VISIBLE ANXIETY OVER CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES OVER AIR DEFENSE SALE PARTICULARLY COMING DAY AFTER REPRESENTATIVE BONKER PRESSED BOTH KING AND OM ON

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ISSUE(HOWEVER WITHOUT NECESSARILY INDICATING HIS OPPOSITION TO SALE) KING CONCERN AND INTEREST REGARDING AIR DEFENSE ISSUE IN CONGRESS REMAIN HIGH AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT KEEPING US ADVISED ON TIMELY BASIS OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.
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